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REMARKS

Claims 1, 2, and 4-66 are pending in this application. In the Office Action, claims 21-66 were withdrawn from consideration for being directed to a non-elected invention. Applicants agree to cancel these claims without prejudice to their rights to file one or more divisional applications for the subject matter of those claims after present claims 1, 2 and 4-20 are allowed.

Claims 1, 2, 4-20 are rejected in the Office Action under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Jiang (U.S. Patent No. 6,167,432). As discussed in detail below, claims 1, 2, 4-20 are not anticipated by Jiang because all the features of claims 1, 2, 4-20 are not shown or suggested by Jiang. Applicants therefore respectfully traverse this rejection.

Independent claim 1 is not anticipated or obvious in view of Jiang because Jiang does not show or suggest, at least, three features of the system defined by claim 1. Jiang does not show or suggest: (1) a transmitter for sending information about the existence of a dedicated site to secondary users that is nominated by the primary user ("Transmitter Feature"); (2) data is shared in a collaborative workspace in accordance with a hierarchy ("Hierarchy Feature"); and (3) the data shared via the dedicated site ("Centralized Feature").

With respect to the Transmitter Feature, independent claim 1 recites:

"a transmitter for sending information about the existence of said dedicated site to said at least one secondary user nominated by said primary user," (emphasis added).

In the Office Action, reliance is placed on the following text from Jiang in connection with the above-quoted section of claim 1:

"[t]he IP addresses of the conference participants are maintained at the designated site and are transmitted to a new conference participant to allow the new conference participant to connect directly into the conference without the new participant having to know the IP addresses of the conference participants. The new participant may be connected to any one of the existing conference participants. Once the conference is established, no data goes through the designated site or a central host. Data packets are directly sent to and received by the respective application program of each participant.."

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The rejection relies on the transmission of an IP address, as quoted in the above text from Jiang, to show the Transmitter Feature of claim 1. However, support for this assertion appears to be lacking in two ways. First, Jiang describes that when a user selects a conference to join, the system sends an IP address to the user, which is used with the help of additional software to put that user in conference. Claim 1 states that what is sent is information about the existence of a dedicated site, which is not something that can be communicated by the content of an IP address. Secondly, the system in Jiang describes that the IP address is sent to a user when the user selects to join a conference that the user selected in a list of conferences on a web page providing the service. The system of claim 1, sends the information about the existence of the dedicated site to a secondary user that is nominated by the primary user. As such, the system in claim 1 contemplates that the primary user has a hand in to whom the information is sent so that he or she can invite users. The sending of an IP address when users, on their volition, join a conference of interest does not show such functionality. Accordingly, the Transmitter Feature of claim 1 is not shown or suggested by Jiang. The same applies to claims 17, 19, 20, which include similar language.

*Being able to click
to join conference w/
IP Address transmission*

*Also, Fig. 7
(password, etc)*

With respect to the Hierarchy Feature, claim 1 recites:

"A system for providing a collaborative workspace for sharing data, comprising . . . a communicator for transmitting data . . . said data being shared in accordance with [a] hierarchy between said users via said dedicated site" (emphasis added)

The system of claim 1, thus, contemplates a sharing of data in the collaborative workspace that is in accordance with an established hierarchy. Although, Jiang describes that a conference can be established by what is referred to as a "chairperson," Jiang, however, does not describe that conference participants or the contents of a conference are treated any differently within a conference. Accordingly, the Hierarchy Feature of claim 1 is not shown or suggested by Jiang.

With respect to the Centralized Feature, claim 1 indicates that the data is shared via a dedicated site. Jiang is directed to a peer-to-peer approach, which is entirely different from the Centralized Feature of claim 1. Such an approach is not only different from the Centralized Feature, but also teaches away from the

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Centralized Feature of claim 1 For example, Jiang specifically states that "[o]nce the conference is established, no data goes through the designated site or a central host," which is inconsistent with the Centralized Feature mentioned above. Accordingly, the Centralized Feature of claim 1 is not anticipated or obvious in view of Jiang.

Claims 2 and 4-16 which depend from claims 1 are allowable at least for the reasons set forth above regarding claim 1. Claim 18 which depends from claims 17 is allowable at least for the reasons set forth above regarding claim 17. Additionally, the dependent claims recite further features not disclosed or known in the prior art, particularly when considered in combination with the unique features of claims 1 or 17.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicant submits that all of the claims are patentable over the cited art and respectfully requests reconsideration and an early indication of allowance. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned if any additional information is required.

Respectfully submitted,

Customer No. 28765
Winston & Strawn LLP
(212) 294-6700